Fiji – Tropical Cyclone Winston

ETC Situation Report #3

Reporting period 10/03/16 to 23/03/16

The next ETC Fiji SitRep will be issued on or around 13/04/16.

Highlights

- The Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) was formally activated on 15 March with the World Food Programme (WFP) and Fiji Ministry of Communications and IT as co-leads. The Fiji National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) is coordinating all efforts in response to Cyclone Winston and has activated the National and Divisional Emergency Operations Centres (EOCs).

- An ICT needs assessment mission was conducted on the islands severely damaged by Tropical Cyclone Winston.

- The ETC is exploring the possibility of developing an ETC2020 pilot project on Communication with Communities (CwC), in Fiji.

Destruction of a satellite kit at the Post Office in Vanua Balavu after Tropical Cyclone Winston.
Photo: WFP/ Rob Buurveld

Situation Overview

- The Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC), led by the World Food Programme (WFP), was activated on 15 March in response to Tropical Cyclone Winson that struck Fiji on 20 February 2016. The ETC continues to assist the government-led response by meeting with its National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) counterpart twice a week to ensure a coordinated response.

- On 21 March 2016, the Government of Fiji extended the state of natural disaster period for another 30 days, to 19 April 2016. The extension applies to severely affected areas of the country.

- The ETC and the NDMO held a meeting on Friday 18 March with the commercial telecommunications providers, Digicel, Vodafone and TFL for an update on their network restoration progress. The companies estimated that about 50% of their operational sites are being powered by generators.

The ETC provides timely, predictable and effective Information Communications Technology services to support the humanitarian community in carrying-out their work efficiently, effectively and safely.

- A joint NDMO - ETC assessment mission was carried out on three Fijian islands that were in the direct path of the cyclone, namely: Vanua Balavu, Koro Island and the north coast of Viti Levu. A senior IT specialist from the WFP Fast IT and Telecommunications Emergency Support Team (FITTEST), deployed to support the ETC Fiji operation, completed this mission on 20 March.

Planned Response

- Following the assessment mission, a report containing findings and recommendations was presented to the NDMO. A technician from ETC partner, RedR Australia arrived in Fiji during the third week of March to help implement recommendations in Viti Levu, Vanua Balavu and Koro Island to facilitate the NDMO's response.

- Due to the lack of access that remote communities living in Vanua Balavu and Koro Islands have to basic communication services following Tropical Cyclone Winson, the ETC is exploring the possibility of developing an ETC2020 pilot project on Communication with Communities (CwC).

Challenges

- Fiji comprises more than 300 islands. As such, access and logistics to some of the more remote islands is challenging for the entire response operation.

Funding

- A humanitarian Flash Appeal has been launched where the ETC is appealing for US$695,000 to support the inter-agency response. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has initiated discussions on whether the Flash Appeal request should be revised.

- The request for US$42,000 submitted to the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) by the ETC was approved.

ETC Meetings

- Local ETC meetings are held every Wednesday. The next meeting will be held Wednesday 30 March. For further information, contact: Fiji.ETC@wfp.org

- Global ETC teleconferences are held according to needs. To be added to the mailing list, contact: Fiji.ETC@wfp.org

Information

- ETC Fiji emergency page: https://www.etcluster.org/emergencies/fiji-tropical-cyclone-winston

- ETC Fiji discussion forum and updates: https://www.etcluster.org/discussions/fiji-tropical-cyclone-winston

Key ETC Contacts

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Acronyms

CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
CwC	Communication with Communities
ETC	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
FITTEST	Fast IT and Telecommunications Emergency Support Team
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
NDMO	National Disaster Management Office
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
WFP	UN World Food Programme

All information related to ETC operations can be found on the ICT Emergency website: www.ETCluster.org

For more information, or to be added or deleted from the mailing list, please contact: Fiji.ETC@wfp.org

Tropical Cyclone Winston – Track Map (Source: Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs)